



VT Parcels ROI Study

Notes from Meeting on 11/18/14 with Parcels Working Group

From: Rich Grady, AppGeo

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Subject: What is parcel data?

Grady proposed to adopt the definition in the VT GIS Parcel Data Standard as a starting point, i.e.: *"Parcel data is the digital, geographically-referenced data used to represent parcel boundaries, unlanded dwellings, and associated attribute information on municipal tax maps."* The standard also cites the definition of "parcel" in State Statute, which defines parcel as *"...all contiguous land in the same ownership, together with all improvements thereon."* And, in the VT Parcel Mapping Guideline, it even says what it is not, in the context of GIS, and what it assists with, i.e.: *"GIS parcel data is NOT the equivalent of legal property records or land surveys, but the data does assist municipal officials with functions such as accurate property tax assessment, conservation, planning, and zoning."* This was the launching off point for the discussion on "what is parcel data used for," (i.e., use cases), which are needed for the ROI Study.

The discussion on uses cases for parcel data produced a question for possibly extending the definition in the standard to include "statewide and seamless," or to at least make it clear that such qualifiers are an important goal of collecting and maintaining parcel data (especially to state agencies, but also regional entities). Other definitional dimensions that came up in terms of what parcel data must include: "complete (i.e. every town), current (i.e. updated at least once a year), and consistent (i.e. matching the state standard). There was also some time spent up front on the word "unlanded" in the definition; condominiums and trailers were discussed in this context, and it was pointed out that 18% of Vermonters live in trailers. And, the age of data was discussed, as a maintenance issue with impact on the value of parcel data.

The following is a summary of the use cases, anecdotes, and observations that were discussed:

### **Use cases**

#### ***For Government:***

- Flooding
- Public Safety and Emergency Management
- Municipal
  - Zoning
  - Planning
  - Conservation
  - General Town Business
  - Property Tax Assessment
  - Permitting

- Stormwater
- Riparian Areas, River Corridors, and Lake Shores
- Forest Management Plans
- Wildlife Migration
- Climate Change
- Wetlands
- Innovative Uses of State Land (e.g. siting solar panels and maintenance garages on underutilized VTrans land)
- Statewide Equalization Study
- Current Use Program

***For Non-Government:***

- Utilities
- Real Estate
- Environmental Consulting
- Surveying
- Forestry

***For Citizens:***

- Volunteer Work (both as individuals and as groups)
- Entrepreneurial Work
- Enforcement of Rights (who owns what, posted property, encroachment)
- Outdoor Recreation

**Anecdotes & Observations**

- Exact answers for the following questions are not known:
  - How much land does the state own, and where is it?
  - How much land does the federal government own, and where is it?
  - How much farm land is there in the state?
  - How much forest land is there in the state?
- State and federal payments to towns are made based on what land and buildings they own (but precise information on their land and buildings is lacking)
- Forest and farm lands are taxed at a lower rate, and the state makes-up the difference to towns, but no funds are collected on the spread
- Economic activity varies around the state, which has bearing on the desired frequency of parcel updates; once a year, to correspond to the update frequency of the Grand List, would be desirable, although less frequent where there is no change may be OK
- Property sales data is available more frequently than updates to the Grand List or to parcel boundaries



- Parcel boundaries do not necessarily align with district or jurisdictional boundaries (town boundaries have not been surveyed in VT)
- PSAP boundaries align with town boundaries, but some parcels are only reachable through the adjacent town

#### **FOLLOW-UP ITEMS FOR APPGEO**

- See VCGI ROI Study on Public Safety
- See VCGI website, enterprise GIS resources, parcel working group
- Develop Draft Online Survey to launch immediately after Thanksgiving weekend
- Identify potential dates for Workshops
- Iterate with VT on which use cases to prioritize, based on importance and statewide scalability